

Request for Waiver of Statewideness

The South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has implemented a work experience program for students with disabilities called Project Skills. This venture is a cooperative arrangement with the local school districts and DRS. South Dakota has 168 school districts statewide. The Division makes this program available to all schools with approximately 100 school districts participating in the program. The program is available to the remaining school districts but they have chosen not to complete a contract with the Division. The Division has been advised by the Rehabilitation Services Administration to request a waiver of statewideness for the Project Skills Program.

Types of Services to be provided

Many students with significant disabilities don't get an opportunity to gain paid employment experience while in high school. Although willing, most employers cannot afford the supports these students frequently require on their first job. This is an important learning, maturing, and socializing experience. The Division of Rehabilitation Services funds a program entitled "Project Skills" to address this need. This program is a cooperative arrangement between the State VR Agency and the local school systems. The Division funds the wages, workers compensation, and FICA while the schools provide the job development, job coaching, and follow-along for the student at the job site. By entering into a contractual agreement with the Designated State Unit, the local school districts are assuring that they will provide the non-federal matching funds.

Written Assurances

Each school enters into an agreement with the Division for Project Skills. This agreement requires the school district to provide written assurance that they will use non-Federal funds for their share of the Project Skills program. The Project Skills program is available only for Vocational Rehabilitation Consumers. School Districts cannot serve non Division consumers and the Division approves the Project Skills Program by completing a work agreement and authorization of services. All state plan requirements for the Division will apply to all services approved under the waiver

All services provided under this waiver are provided under an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and authorized by the vocational rehabilitation consumer's VR Counselor. The Division assures that all State Plan requirements, including the Order of Selection if appropriate, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.